

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph on page 19, beginning at line 3, and ending on line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

In this case the first key is owned by verifying authority 100 and is kept highly secure (for example, using standard physical and procedural measures typically employed to keep an important private key secret while preventing it from being lost). Once message digest 116 is locked into strong box 118 using the first key 122, the strong box can be opened only by using the corresponding second key 124. Note that other items (e.g., further identification information, a time/date stamp, etc.) can also be placed within strong box [106] 118.